

DPH Presents 2019 State Health Improvement Plan Progress Report and Launches Updated Website

DOVER – Today, the Division of Public Health (DPH), along with state and community partners, hosted its annual stakeholder meeting to discuss the Delaware State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) and present the 2019 annual SHIP report. The report serves as an update on progress made and identifies to what degree, DPH and its stakeholders and partners are aligned with the SHIP's priority areas.

The purpose of the State Health Improvement Plan is to describe how DPH and the community it serves will work together to improve the health of Delaware's population. Communities, stakeholders, and partners can use the SHIP to set priorities, direct the use of resources, and develop and implement projects, programs and policies. The SHIP's four priority areas, identified through a State Health Needs Assessment (SHNA) process, are: **chronic disease, maternal and child health, substance use disorder and mental health.**

"The Delaware State Health Improvement Plan is more comprehensive than the roles and responsibilities of the health department alone, and depends on the participation of a broad set of community stakeholders and partners," said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. "These community members have done an outstanding job to improve health by aligning efforts and investments in projects, programs and policies."

The SHIP process follows a five-year action cycle; the most recent SHIP began in 2015 to 2016, with the needs assessment. Wednesday's annual SHIP meeting brought together stakeholders

for the first time since working on the assessment, and provided an opportunity for attendees to discuss progress made this past year, as well as identify gaps. The 2019 SHIP Report discusses which recommendations have the greatest degrees of alignment with stakeholder efforts, and where more work is needed. The 2019 SHIP Annual Report is available on DelawareSHIP.org, which has an updated resources section and an updated look.

The report shows that there is substantial alignment underway across each of the Delaware SHIP priority areas, with the greatest emphasis seen in the area of chronic disease. The greatest degree of alignment was observed in “making the healthy choice the easy choice”; the least amount of alignment is occurring around efforts to increase the number of Medicaid dental providers in underserved areas. In the area of maternal and child health, stakeholder groups are more aligned to promote health education and emphasize healthy parenting in schools than they are around efforts to incorporate graduated levels for health education in schools. In addressing substance use disorder, stakeholder groups are in strong alignment to reduce substance use disorders overall, and are particularly focused on opioid use disorder. Less alignment is seen around reducing tobacco and tobacco substitute use; however, the passage and signing of Senate Bill 25 in 2019, which raised the minimum age to buy tobacco and vape products from 18 to 21, is a sign of great progress.

In the area of mental health, stakeholders are most aligned around improving access to behavioral and mental health services, with less alignment found around providing each school with a trained mental health provider. However, efforts to help fund and/or expand these type of services are underway through the FY2020 state budget and federal grants. The needs assessment also determined that none of these recommendations can or should be implemented separately. To receive the biggest benefit, the Delaware SHIP recommends a policy,

systems and environmental (PSE) approach. System-wide, stakeholders have promoted health in all policies, engaged in social marketing campaigns, and addressed social determinants of health.

In 2021, the SHIP's partners will participate in another needs assessment, which will lead to the publication of the next SHIP in 2023.

Implementation of the SHIP project involves a collaboration between DPH, the Partnership for Healthy Communities at the University of Delaware and the Delaware Academy of Medicine/Delaware Public Health Association. Other stakeholder groups include hospitals, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), health-focused groups, coalitions, and research and education institutions. As part of the SHIP's five-year action cycle, DPH conducts a periodic review process that helps the agency understand the needs of the community, identify gaps in services, and respond to emerging and continuous trends in health and well-being.

A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY availability in Delaware, visit <http://delawarerelay.com>.

The Delaware Department of Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no

sugary beverages.